
Sunitha Prabhu and Arthur Valle - Towards the enhancement of Flexible Assessments, an Ako-inspired teaching & learning approach

Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)

sunitha.prabhu@wintec.ac.nz

Sunitha has over 20 years' experience teaching Information Technology in New Zealand. She is currently a Senior Academic Staff Member in the Centre for Information Technology (CFIT) at Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec). Sunitha completed her Masters in Computing and Mathematical Sciences at Waikato University, a Bachelor of Engineering (Electronics) Degree at Marathwada University, India.

Arthur Valle is a Principal Academic Staff Member in the Centre for Information Technology (CFIT) at Wintec Institute of Technology, where he is also the IT Research Leader. Arthur has a PhD degree in Production and System Engineering from Pontifical Catholic University of Parana (PUCPR) in Brazil. As his thesis, he developed a method for applying Process Mining techniques in software process assessments.

With the way adult teaching and learning is changing, mainly due to diversity of student set, tertiary institutes are moving towards learner-centred approaches including comprehensive learning and flexible assessments. This presentation presents "Flexible Assessments", an approach inspired by Ako principles. Ako principles shift the emphasis from the teacher being the sole source of information to sharing ownership with the learner. We implemented Flexible Assessment in Semester 2 2018 on a trial basis. Flexible assessment gives learners the flexibility with the type of assessment (how), the timing of assessment (when), and the quantity of assessment (how much) they choose to attempt while ensuring that the assessment integrity is maintained and that the learning outcomes for the course are achieved. This presentation discusses the achievements of flexible supervised assessments from the learners' perspective and the tutors' perspective in the initial implementation. For instance, in addition to the fact that this occurrence achieved better results than the previous occurrences of the same course, it was found that students were more relaxed and hence more motivated to learn. Based on analysis of quantitative and qualitative feedback received, we outline some potential improvements that can be made to this approach. For example, provide more alternatives for assessment types (e.g. presentations) rather than having only the supervised assessments.